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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
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USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
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PARIS ALSO FOR POL
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [11. Mideast](#)
- [12. U.S.-Israel Relations](#)

Key stories in the media:

All media highlighted the suicide bombing that occurred outside Beersheva's central bus station on Sunday morning. Two security guards were seriously wounded and 61 other people were treated for shock. Israel Radio reported that the suicide bomber has not been identified, but that Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for the attack. Leading media highlighted the fact that southern Israel is not protected by a security fence. This morning, the electronic media reported that an IDF soldier was lightly wounded when Palestinians opened fire on the car in which he was driving in the Gaza Strip. Ha'aretz says that Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, who is arriving today for a visit to Israel and the PA, will try to restore the calm.

Leading media reported that during the weekend, President Bush demanded that the Palestinians respond to Israel's disengagement by cracking down on terrorism. The media say that this is the President's strongest such statement since the withdrawal.

On Sunday, Ha'aretz reported that despite the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Israel and the U.S. to end the dispute over Israel's sale to China of spare parts for attack drones, U.S. sanctions continue.

Speaking on Israel Radio this morning, FM Silvan Shalom said that Israel would consider using the disengagement as a positive model for future moves, should long-term calm be achieved with the Palestinians.

All media reported that on Sunday, the cabinet approved the agreement with Egypt to deploy some 750 Egyptian border guards on the Philadelphia route between the Gaza Strip and Sinai. Eighteen ministers voted for the agreement and only two against: the Likud's Limor Livnat and Tzachi Hanegbi. On Sunday, Yediot and Maariv reported that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak might visit Israel in November.

On Sunday, leading media reported that on Saturday, Hamas released a video showing bomb-maker Mohammed Deif, who tops the list of militants wanted by Israel, celebrating the Gaza Strip pullout as a victory for armed resistance and urging the destruction of Israel. Today, Jerusalem Post quoted sources in Ramallah and the Gaza Strip as saying that tensions are mounting between the PA and Hamas following the release of the tape.

Citing AP, Ha'aretz reported that Egyptian FM Ahmed Ali Abu el-Gheit turned down a request from the International Atomic Energy Agency to sign the

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, saying Israel should first join a separate agreement calling for a halt to the spread of nuclear weapons.

Maariv reported that the defense establishment has decided that 15 settler families that reside in Hebron's wholesale market will be forcibly evacuated by the end of the year.

On Sunday, Maariv cited a military document investigating Thursday's killing of five Palestinians by IDF troops in Tulkarm. The document reported on irregularities, including the fact that a Palestinian youth was killed mistakenly. However, Maariv cited the IDF as saying that the operation was conducted properly.

Yediot reported that a rocket-like device has recently been found near PM Sharon's Sycamore Ranch. The newspaper reported that the Shin Bet and police have not determined the factors behind the device.

The leading news web site Ynet reported that the increase in the West Bank settler population is mostly a result of jump in the number of residents in ultra-Orthodox communities, home to about quarter of all settlers, who seek cheaper accommodation.

All media reported that Sharon's son, Knesset Member Omri Sharon, was indicted Sunday on counts of flouting campaign finance laws, forging corporate documents, perjury, and various offenses related to the 1999 Likud primaries. The state prosecution has requested that Omri Sharon serve time in prison.

Ha'aretz reported that the head of Israel's National Security Council, Maj. Gen. (res.) Giora Eiland, has advised PM Sharon that he intends to resign from his post by the end of the year.

Yediot on Sunday presented what it says is the PA's development plan for "Gaza 2015." On Sunday, Hatzofe reported that Palestinians have assigned the names of "Arafat" and "Yassin" to abandoned Gush Katif settlements.

Jerusalem Post quoted chief PA negotiator Saeb Erekat as saying Sunday that the PA will continue to work toward moving Yasser Arafat's tomb to the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mark Regev was quoted as saying in an interview with Jerusalem Post that, from the Israeli perspective, the issue is not on the agenda.

On Sunday, Yediot reported that Danny Ayalon, Israel's Ambassador to the U.S., refuses to release to the State's Attorney's Office recordings of senior Foreign Ministry officials that revealed that FM Shalom and his wife demanded that Ayalon's personal assistant be dismissed because he didn't arrange a meeting between them and Madonna.

All media reported that in Frankfurt on Sunday, prominent Israeli author Amos Oz received the Goethe Prize, which some media described as second in importance to the Nobel Prize. Oz, who talked about the painful disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank, said that Germany and the rest of Europe must lend a supportive hand to Israel and to peace, without coming out for or against either Israel or the Palestinians.

Jerusalem Post reported that 20 Bedouin families -- all Israeli citizens -- from the Gaza Strip village of Dahaniyeh, who have assisted the defense establishment, will move today to new homes in Tel Arad, in the eastern Negev.

Maariv reported that the IDF has dismantled the unit of the IDF Intelligence Branch that collected information about Jews. (It was established ahead of the disengagement.)

The advance of Hurricane Katrina toward New Orleans dominated this morning's broadcasts in the electronic media.

11. Mideast:

Summary:

Liberal op-ed writer Ofer Shelach opined in the editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot

Aharonot: "The ... insight [that] only a light at the end of the Palestinian tunnel, a state in the making with Israeli support, could help reduce terror -- this insight has not yet dawned on the decision makers in Jerusalem."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Having praised the terrorists to the hilt and credited them with pushing Israel out of Gaza, Abbas continues to campaign resolutely to make sure they are armed to the teeth."

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Egypt needs this new agreement to succeed, which is why President Hosni Mubarak acquiesced to Israel's last-minute request to add a new clause to the agreement."

Senior op-ed writer Akiva Eldar wrote in Ha'aretz: "The time for indulging [Sharon] is now over. Sharon's good deeds will be counted in his favor, while his bad deeds will be chalked up against him."

Block Quotes:

I. "There Is a Connection, There Is No Connection"

Liberal op-ed writer Ofer Shelach opined in the editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (August 29): "Common sense -- and public Palestinian sources, such as public opinion polls -- say that the Palestinians have learned from disengagement that Israel understands nothing but force. What other conclusion could be drawn, after years in which every Israeli administration declared that there would be no negotiations or territorial concessions under fire?.... However, no one can say whether this indeed brought about an increase in terror, and certainly no one can prove a connection with the terror attack in Beersheva or any other local action.... The change can only be made by a [Palestinian] government that is capable of giving its people hope -- and a clear Israeli message of supporting this hope. Unilateral steps, which the Prime Minister insists to this day constitute a punishment to the Palestinians (although no one besides him understands what kind of punishment this is), do not contribute a thing to creating this kind of body on the other side. Israel has long since relinquished its habit of bombing PA targets after terror attacks, perhaps because the absurdity of these steps was painfully obvious and perhaps because there were no PA targets left to bomb. But the opposite insight -- only a light at the end of the Palestinian tunnel, a state in the making with Israeli support, could help reduce terror -- this insight has not yet dawned on the decision makers in Jerusalem."

II. "Hudna, Shmudna"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (August 29): "Suicide bombing isn't an individual undertaking; it is the culmination of a carefully orchestrated effort. The bomber is the agent of an entire terror infrastructure. It is this infrastructure that the Palestinian Authority has been called upon to dismantle, time and again.... Abbas promised just prior to yesterday's Beersheva blast that the truce he committed the Palestinian side to long ago -- a 'hudna,' which was in fact never genuinely enforced -- would be of unlimited duration.... Meanwhile, having praised the terrorists to the hilt and credited them with pushing Israel out of Gaza, Abbas continues to campaign resolutely to make sure they are armed to the teeth. This is the dangerous subtext of his demands that Israel forfeit all controls on incoming land, air and sea traffic into Gaza.... Were he sincere about eradicating terror he'd have put Hamas master bomb-maker Muhammad Deif behind bars instead of allowing him to remain at large within his fiefdom to dispatch taped messages exhorting Palestinians to greater bloodshed in order to wrest Jaffa, Safed, Nazareth and Ashkelon from Israel. Deif's in-your-face harangues are emblematic of what is wrong with the PA."

III. "Egypt Needs Success"

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (August 28): "The uniqueness of the Philadelphia agreement with the Egyptians lies not in the deployment of 750 Egyptian border guards along the 14-kilometer stretch between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Rather, it lies in the direct involvement of Egypt in Palestinian-

Israeli security, largely with the aim of preventing the activity of Islamic extremist groups that could spill over from Gaza into Egypt.... In the past, Egypt's involvement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict consisted mainly of giving advice and criticizing Israel. Egypt needs this new agreement to succeed, which is why President Hosni Mubarak acquiesced to Israel's last-minute request to add a new clause to the agreement.... A formula was found that indirectly deals with a prohibition against selling or giving Egyptian weaponry to the PA."

IV. "An Insufficient Remedy"

Senior op-ed writer Akiva Eldar wrote in Ha'aretz (August 29): "The disengagement from Gaza was a necessary but insufficient remedy for the prevention of a binational reality, if not a binationalist-religious one. A state where 40 percent of the residents under its control are not Jewish cannot be called a Jewish state. The disengagement plan justifiably gave Sharon parliamentary immunity against initiatives of the extreme right to foil the pullout of the civilians and the soldiers who risked their lives needlessly. The time for indulging him is now over. Sharon's good deeds will be counted in his favor, while his bad deeds will be chalked up against him."

12. U.S.-Israel Relations:

Summary:

Senior Likud member and former ambassador to the U.S. Zalman Shoval wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "China's accelerated economic growth is causing an increase in demand for Middle East oil and more active political activity by Beijing in our region -- a reality that Washington cannot ignore."

Block Quotes:

"Friendship Dependent on Black Gold"

Senior Likud member and former ambassador to the U.S. Zalman Shoval wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (August 29): "Those who want to, can spot certain clouds that have recently appeared in the blue skies of Israel's relations with the U.S. For example, the U.S. administration has delayed its announcement of the 'disengagement grant' -- and it was said that the proposed sum will reach half of what was requested by Israel. Is this a diplomatic step hinting at American expectations for the post-disengagement stage -- or perhaps 'merely' further proof that Israel has not yet learned the complex rules of requests for special aid from the Americans?.... But what should raise more in-depth thought on our part are possible trends in U.S. foreign policy for the long term. The name of the game is oil. If Washington had hopes that its military victory in Iraq would assure an orderly supply of the black gold, those were disproved. Moreover: China's accelerated economic growth is causing an increase in demand for Middle East oil and more active political activity by Beijing in our region -- a reality that Washington cannot ignore.... In the present situation, greater weight should be given to the opinion that after the abandonment of Gaza, we should actually strengthen our hold on the settlement blocs in Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank]. What will the Americans say? There will probably be criticism, but we may have to remind them that we hold an explicit commitment by President Bush, with the support of both houses of Congress, which means that these blocs will remain in Israel's hands."